

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11
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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2470
INFO AMEMBASSY ROME

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, IT
SUBJECT: LOCAL ELECTIONS: THE UNCOMFORTABLE ADVERSARIES

REF: (A) ROME 8399, (B) ROME 5462

BEGIN SUMMARY. THOUGH ACTIVE, PUBLIC CAMPAIGNING IN SICILY'S MAY 14-28 ADMINISTRATIVE ELECTIONS BEGAN ONLY ON APRIL 30, EVIDENCE TO DATE SUGGESTS THAT BOTH THE DC AND PCI FIND THEIR CURRENT POLITICAL RELATIONSHIP SOMEWHAT UNCOMFORTABLE ON THE HUSTINGS. DISCOMFORT IS NATURALLY MORE VISIBLE AMONG THE DC AND IS PARTICULARLY ACUTE IN COMMUNES WITH FEWER THAN 5000 INHABITANTS WHICH VOTE UNDER THE MAJORITY SYSTEM AND WHERE THE DC AND PCI REMAIN THE CORE ELEMENT IN THE SOLE COMPETING LISTS. END SUMMARY.

1. AT AN APRIL 30 CAMPAIGN CURTAIN-RAISER IN A PALERMO MOVIE THEATER, DC REGIONAL SECRETARY NICOLETTI (THE IDEOLOGUE OF CLOSER DC-PCI COLLABORATION IN SICILY) BEGAN THE PROCEEDINGS WITH CAREFULLY VEILED PRAISE FOR THE NEW DC-PCI RELATIONSHIP, DEFINING IT AS A STRATEGIC CHOICE NOT AN EXPEDIENT. RESPONSES, SOME RATHER VEHEMENT, FROM LOCAL-LEVEL PARTY OFFICIALS STRESSED THE PRACTICAL DIFFICULTIES OF APPLYING THE PARTYS "STRATEGIC" CHOICE AT THE ELECTORAL LEVEL WHERE TRADITIONAL ADVERSARY RELATIONSHIPS REMAIN

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STRONG. ONE PARTY SPOKESMAN FROM THE PROVINCES, FOR EXAMPLE, NOTED THAT CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS IN HIS AREA RESENTED THE "SATANIC SNEER" WHICH THE COMMUNISTS HAVE ADOPTED BECAUSE OF RECENT PARTY ADVANCES.

2. WHETHER SNEERING SATANICALLY OR NOT, PCI CAMPAIGNERS HAVE STRESSED SOLIDARITY AMONG THE CONSTITUTIONAL-ARC PARTIES AS ESSENTIAL TO THE RESOLUTION OF ITALY'S PROBLEMS, PARTICULARLY IN THE

AFTERMATH OF THE MORO AFFAIR. IN A MAY 7 SPEECH IN CEFALU',
FOR EXAMPLE, REGIONAL ASSEMBLY PRESIDENT DE PASQUALE SUGGESTED THAT
TERRORISM AND SIMILAR NATIONAL ILLS HAD NOT BEEN FEATURES OF THE
EARLY POST-WAR PERIOD WHEN CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS AND COMMUNISTS HAD
GOVERNED TOGETHER. CURRENT TERRORIST ACTIVITIES SHOULD THEREFORE
BE SEEN AS RENEWED "REACTIONARY EFFORTS" TO DESTROY THE NEW-FOUND
UNITY OF THE "POPULAR FORCES". DE PASCUALE'S MONSTER-RALLY EVEN
FEATURED A PROSPECTIVE ALLIANCE BETWEEN FAR-RIGHT AND FAR-LEFT
TERRORISTS AND THE MAFIA SHOULD POPULAR-FORCE SOLIDARITY AGAIN
BE THREATENED.

3. AN INTERESTING SIDELIGHT OF THE PCI CAMPAIGN HAS BEEN PARTY
CRITICISM OF DC CAMPAIGNERS WHO HAVE REFERRED TO MARXISM-LENINISM
(AND THE PCI) AS INTELLECTUAL AND POLITICAL PROGENITORS OF CURRENT
FAR-LEFT TERRORISM. ON APRIL 30, THE PCI DAILY UNITA' PUBLISHED A
LETTER BY SICILIAN REGIONAL SECRETARY GIANNI PARISI WHO TOOK
SOME IN THE DC TO TASK FOR USING "MALICIOUS AND FALSE ARGUMENTS
ABOUT THE PCI'S SO-CALLED RESPONSIBILITY" FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF
TERRORISM IN THE COUNTRY. PARISI VOICED THE HOPE THAT THESE WERE
SINGLE ACTS RATHER THAN REGIONAL DC PARTY POLICY. IN A MAY 7
NEWSPAPER INTERVIEW, DC SECRETARY NICOLETTI HASTENED TO REASSURE
PARISI SUGGESTING THAT THE CRITICISED REFERENCES WERE ONLY
ISOLATED EXAMPLES WHICH THE PCI SHOULD NOT EMPHASIZE WITH
UNDUE ATTENTION. NICOLETTI ALSO SUGGESTED THAT THE PCI COULD
HARDLY EXPECT A TOTAL BLACK-OUT OF THE "DIALECTIC" BETWEEN PARTIES.
COLLINS

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